

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
ICA-11 IO-13 AID-05 HA-05 ACDA-12 TRSE-00 OMB-01
EUR-12 /122 W
-----117733 050613Z /10

R 041350Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY SANA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4349
INFO AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY AMMAN

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 SANA 1615

E.O. 11652: XGDS-2
TAGS: PINT, YE
SUBJ: GHASHMI MOVES TO CONSOLIDATE POWER

REF: SANA 1501

BEGIN SUMMARY: GHASHMI CONTINUES TO MOVE TO CONSOLIDATE
POWER. NEXT MOVES PREDICTED HERE INCLUDE GOVERNMENT RE-
SHUFFLE, CONTINUING RELOCATION OF SOME MILITARY UNITS,
CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM, PERHAPS SOME STEPS AGAINST SOVIETS,
AND FURTHER ACCOMMODATION OF RIGHT WING ELEMENTS IN RELIGIOUS
AND LEGAL HIERARCHY. SOME SEASONED OBSERVERS CALL PROSPECTS
"GRIM" WHILE OTHERS SEE TURN TO RIGHT AS USEFUL AND OVERDUE
MOVE TO BROADEN BASE OF GOVERNMENT. END SUMMARY.

1. ABD AL-KARIM AL-IRYANI, ONE OF MOST RESPECTED AND
CAPABLE FIGURES IN YARG, IS BOWING OUT OF MINEDUCATION THIS
WEEK BY TAKING TRIP TO CAIRO, ALLEGEDLY FOR MEDICAL ATTENTION.
HE HAS IN FACT NOT BEEN IN MINISTRY IN MORE THAN TWO WEEKS,
AND HAS FAILED IN THIS PERIOD TO GET NECESSARY BACKING FROM
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PRESIDENT AND OTHERS TO CONTINUE HIS CURRICULUM REFORMS AND
OTHER PLANS TO DEVELOP MINISTRY (SEE REFTEL). HE MAY BE
OUT OF GOVERNMENT ALTOGETHER ALTHOUGH GHASHMI TOLD
AMBASSADOR THAT ABD AL-KARIM WAS "NOT COMMUNIST" AS
CHARGED BY RELIGIOUS LEADERS AND WAS INSTEAD ONE OF "ABLEST
MINISTERS." IN LINE WITH THIS, SOME PREDICT THAT HE WILL
BECOME MINAGRICULTURE; OTHERS SAY HE WILL GO BACK TO BEING

MINISTER OF DEVELOPMENT, WITH ALI AL-BAHR REPLACING MUHAMMAD ABDAL WAHHAB AL-ARIQI AS CPO HEAD.

2. OTHER CABINET REASSIGNMENTS ARE UNCLEAR, BUT CONSENSUS IS THAT THEY WILL NEITHER BE NUMEROUS NOR PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT. GHASHMI IS NOT IN HURRY. SIX MONTHS HAVE PASSED SINCE HAMDI KILLED BUT NEW PRESIDENT, WHILE HE GIVES IMPRESSION OF CONFIDENCE IN PERSONAL MEETINGS, STILL SEEMS VERY RELUCTANT TO ACT IN CIVIL SPHERE, PARTICULARLY WITH MINISTERS AND OTHERS HE DOES NOT KNOW WELL. HE TOLD AMBASSADOR THAT HE EXPECTED PARLIAMENT TO RECOMMEND ABOLITION OF COMMAND COUNCIL IN FAVOR OF PRESIDENTIAL SYSTEM, BUT NOT SOON.

3. WE THINK REAL REASON FOR DELAY IN CABINET RESHUFFLE IS BECAUSE GHASHMI WANTS DUMP ABDALLAH ABDAL ALIM FIRST, AND IN RECENT INTERVIEW WITH AMBASSADOR, THIS YOUNG COMMAND COUNCIL MEMBER SEEMED TO HAVE LOST ALL HIS EARLIER SWAGGER AND DASH. HE ADMITTED THAT HIS PARATROOP UNITS WERE BEING RELOCATED TO SAADA AND MARIB, THUS LOSING THEIR KEY ROLE OF CAPITAL DEFENSE AGAINST THE TRIBES, BUT HE SAID WEAKLY THAT HE THOUGHT (HOPED?) THAT COMMAND COUNCIL WOULD NOT BE CHANGED BEFORE ELECTIONS HAD BEEN HELD FOR PRESIDENT. GHASHMI INDICATED, HOWEVER, THAT ELECTIONS WERE VERY FAR IN FUTURE.

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4. SOME SOURCES IN SANA SAY GHASHMI MOVES WILL IN NEAR FUTURE CONTAIN SOME HARD SWIPES AT SOVIETS. EGYPTIAN CHARGE SAYS MILITARY MISSION WILL BE SHIFTED TO HODEIDA, AND SOME OTHER ELEMENTS IN GOVERNMENT ARE PRESSING TO THROW OUT SOVIET EMBASSY MINISTER COUNSELOR AS SPY. WE'RE NOT SURE YARG WILL MOVE SO SHARPLY, BUT THEY MAY WANT SOMETHING TO BALANCE THEIR RECENT ACCEPTANCE OF MORE MILITARY EQUIPMENT, SPECIFICALLY ANTONOV TRANSPORTS, FROM THE USSR.

5. MOST DISCONCERTING NEW DEVELOPMENT IS INCREASING OPENNESS AND SEVERITY OF DEMANDS BY MUSLIM RIGHT-WINGERS. NOT ONLY HAVE THEY SUCCEEDED IN OUSTING IRYANI BUT THEY ARE ALSO GUNNING FOR NEWLY APPOINTED ISMAIL AL-WAZIR, WHOSE POST AS "ATTORNEY GENERAL" MAKES HIM RESPONSIBLE FOR LOOKING INTO ABUSES OF ARREST POWER BY GOVERNMENT. MINISTRY OF JUSTICE HAS SUCCEEDED IN HAVING LAW -- WHICH AMOUNTED TO BILL OF RIGHTS -- SUSPENDED. ISLAMIC LAW IS GOOD ENOUGH, THEY SAY, AND GHASHMI APPARENTLY AGREES. HUSAYN AL-HUBAYSHI, LEGAL ADVISOR TO PRESIDENT, IS UNDER ATTACK NOT ONLY FOR THIS LAW BUT FOR EFFORTS TO PASS CRIMINAL CODE. "WE'RE RETAINING ALL THE TRADITIONAL ISLAMIC PRESCRIPTIONS,"

PRIME MINISTER RECENTLY TOLD DCM, "INCLUDING AMPUTATION OF HAND FOR STEALING AND STONING FOR ADULTERY. BUT WE WANT TO REGULARIZE PROCEDURES AND REFORM COURT SYSTEM." ACCORDING TO HUBAYSHI, LATTER CUTS AT INTERESTS OF CERTAIN QADIS AND POLICE OFFICIALS, WHO ENRICH THEMSELVES BY ARRESTING AND INVESTIGATING CERTAIN "CRIMES." ARGUMENT IS BEING MADE, OF COURSE, THAT NEW LAW IS UNGODLY AND UN-YEMENI, NOT USEFUL REFORM. MILD MANNERED HUBAYSHI ENDED UP STALKING OUT OF MEETING WITH MININT YUSEFI (LT.COL. AND

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4350
INFO AMEMBASSY JIDDA
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S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 SANA 1615

VERY GOOD MUSLIM), MIN JUSTICE ALI SIMAAN (KNOWN VARIOUSLY AS "THE BEARD" AND "THE TUC-," FOR HIS COIQRVATIVE VIEWS, AND ANOTHER QADI. HUBAYSHI, AN ADENI EDUCATED IN BRITISH LAW, SAYS HE LOST HIS TEMPER SO BADLY THAT HE SHOUTED THAT CONSERVATIVES WERE ENTRENCHING THEMSELVES IN POSITIONS WHICH WILL BE THEIR GRAVES. HUBAYSHI IS, FOR MOMENT, STAYING HOME, FEIGNING ILLNESS, IN ORDER TO ESCAPE QUERULOUS PHONE CALLS AND VISITS.

6. RESISTANCE TO NEW LAWS MIGHT HAVE BEEN PREDICTED AND MODERNIZERS WERE MOVING OUT OF ADMINISTRATIVE AREAS AND COMPANY LAW INTO CIVIL AND CRIMINAL CODES WHERE ISLAMIC LAW HAS LONG BEEN HIGHLY SPECIFIC AND HAS ELABORATE BUREAUCRACY TO EXECUTE IT. BUT RETROGRADE MUSLIM SENTIMENTS ARE SURFACING IN OTHER WASY. GIRLS HAVE BEEN ARRESTED FOR NOT VEILING. A SEMINAR AT THE UNIVERSITY ON

WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT WAS BROKEN UP BY MUSLIM
BROTHERS. MOSQUE DENUNCIATIONS OF LEFTISTS AND FOREIGN
INFLUENCES CONTINUE.

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7. SOME SEASONED OBSERVERS CALL PROSPECTS GRIM. THEY
SEE SPLIT BETWEEN NORTH AND SOUTH, ARMY AND CIVILIAN,
TRADITIONALIST AND MODERNIZER. OTHERS SAY THAT GHASHMI,
IF HE SUCCEEDS IN BRINGING NORTH INTO REPUBLIC, CAN
EASILY HOLD ONTO SOUTH WHILE PUSHING DEVELOPMENT AND
GOVERNMENT AUTHORITY INTO ALL PARTS OF YAR.
SCOTES

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